

Alvaro Siza

Alvaro Siza (*1933), the best known contemporary Portuguese architect, is a modernist by conviction yet at the same time firmly rooted in the traditions of his own country. He embarked on his career with the Boa Nova Restaurant (Leca da Palmeira) in 1963. In the following years he carried out several buildings of a wide variety in Portugal. Siza's creative philosophy can be condensed to fit on a few scraps of paper: his sketches. If we look attentively at these notes, we will be able to discern all those concepts on which this brilliant Portuguese architect bases his work. On the one hand, we find the importance he gives to place : one looks at the sketches he makes in situ prior to presenting a proposal will suffice. The emplacement becomes the project's nucleus, establishing a dialogue with the site and reinterpreting it, without mimicking it, in order to assign it the role of the foundation of his constructions. Another of the constants in the profound social conscience. The people who appear in his drawings are not there by chance, but to provide a human scale for his architecture.

Siza does not draw up abstract illusions, he constructs buildings for people, constantly bearing in mind the material and spiritual requisites of their users. Siza's passion for building also shines through in his sketches, where he is able to explore a multiplicity of solutions for the details: anchoring systems, intersections, facings, baseboard, carpentry... The millimeter by-millimeter precision allows him to shape the whole and to offer our sense diminutive pleasures.

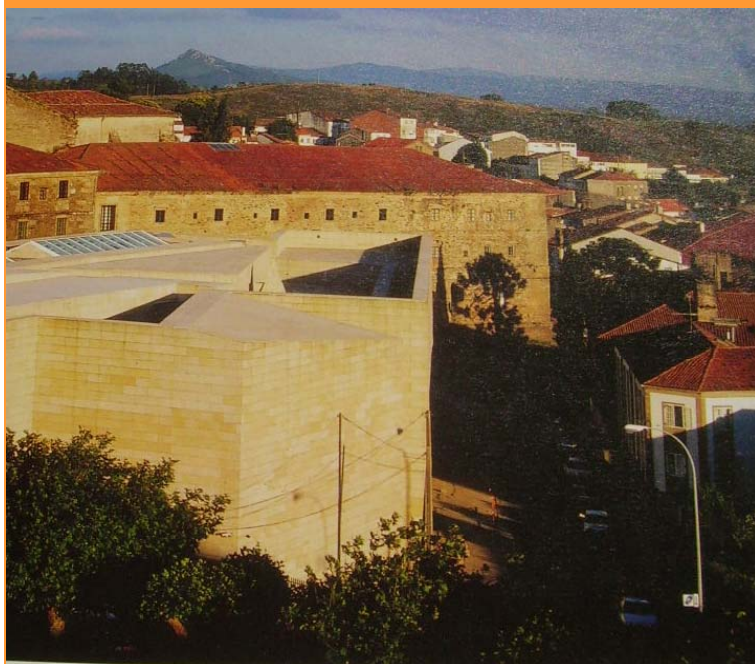
Sensitivity to the material is another of Siza's textures and facings are as important in his buildings as in the treatment of light. The lines used in his sketches show the cutting up, the assembly of the materials. The fineness of the inherent in the wood all blend into the whole. Siza's architecture is, definitively, in the widest parameters that are social, all, of an astonishing and endlessly poetic spaces.



Sketch of the façade Entwurf der Fassade
Esquisse de la façade Schizzo della facciata



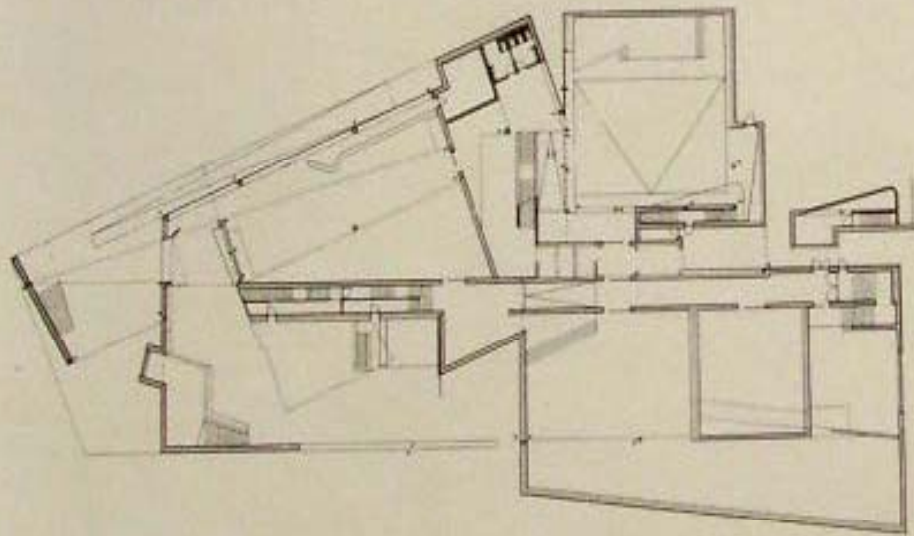
Sketch of one of the entrances Entwurf eines der Eingänge
Esquisse d'une des entrées Schizzo di una delle entrate



GALICIAN CENTER OF CONTEMPORARY ART, SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA , SPAIN 1988- 1993

THE COMMISSION CONSISTES IN CREATING A MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN THE ENVIRONS OF THE CONVENT OF SANTO DOMINGO DE BONALVAL. THE CENTER IS MADE UP OF TWO ELEMENTS WHICH, COINCIDING WITH THE ENTRANCE, DEFINE A SMALL OPEN-AIR SPACE THAT CONTRASTS WITH A PLATFORM CLOSED BY TWO OF THE CONVENT'S FAÇADES.; THE AUDITORIUM AND THE LIBRARY ACCESS TO THE GARDEN IS DEFINED BY THE ARRANGEMENT OF THESE TWO URBAN SPACES, WHICH FACE EACH OTHER, SO THAT THIS ACCESS BECOMES THE FOCUS AROUND WHICH THE REST OF THE BUILDINGS ARE RANGED. IT IS NOT UNLIKE WHAT HAPPENED IN THE TIMES WHEN THE CONVENT ITSELF WAS BUILT. THE LAYOUT IS IN THREE PARTS: THE VESTIBULE AND THE OFFICES; THE AUDITORIUM AND THE LIBRARY; AND THE EXHIBITION ROOMS.





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Semi-basement

Étage semi-cellier

Halbsouterrain

Piano semi interrato

1. Access

2. Exhibition rooms

3. Offices

4. Lavatories

5. Patio

6. Lanterns

1. Eingang

2. Ausstellungsräume

3. Büroräume

4. Toiletten

5. Hof

6. Oberlichter

1. Accès

2. Salles d'exposition

3. Bureaux

4. Toilettes

5. Patio

6. Lucarnes

1. Accesso

2. Sale espositive

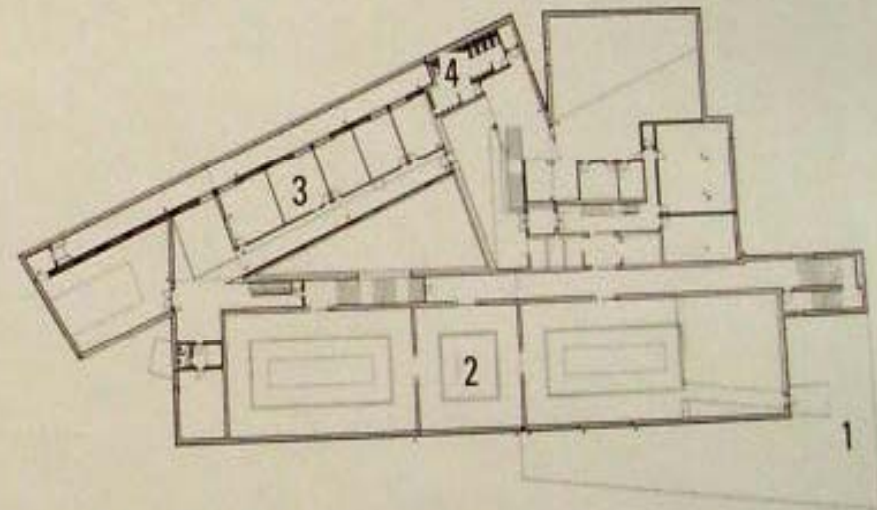
3. Uffici

4. Toilettes

5. Patio

6. Lucernari

Galician Center of Contemporary Art, Santiago de Compostela, Spain 1988-1993

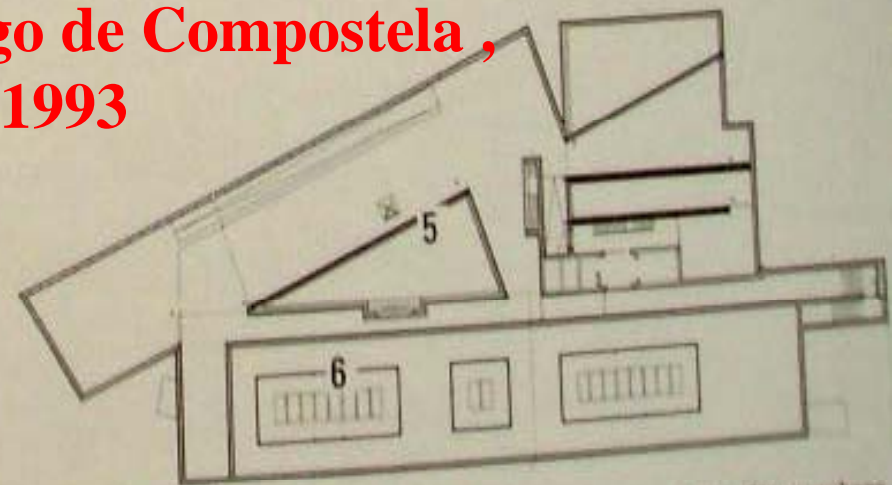


Ground floor

Rez-de-chaussée

Erdgeschoss

Piano terra



First floor

Premier étage

Erstes Obergeschoss

Piano prime

The Veira Castro House

1984-1994

The house in one hill that dominate the city of Viva Nova de Familçao. Because of the slope terrain, the construction was set on an artificial terrace at the opposite end of the entrance to the property.

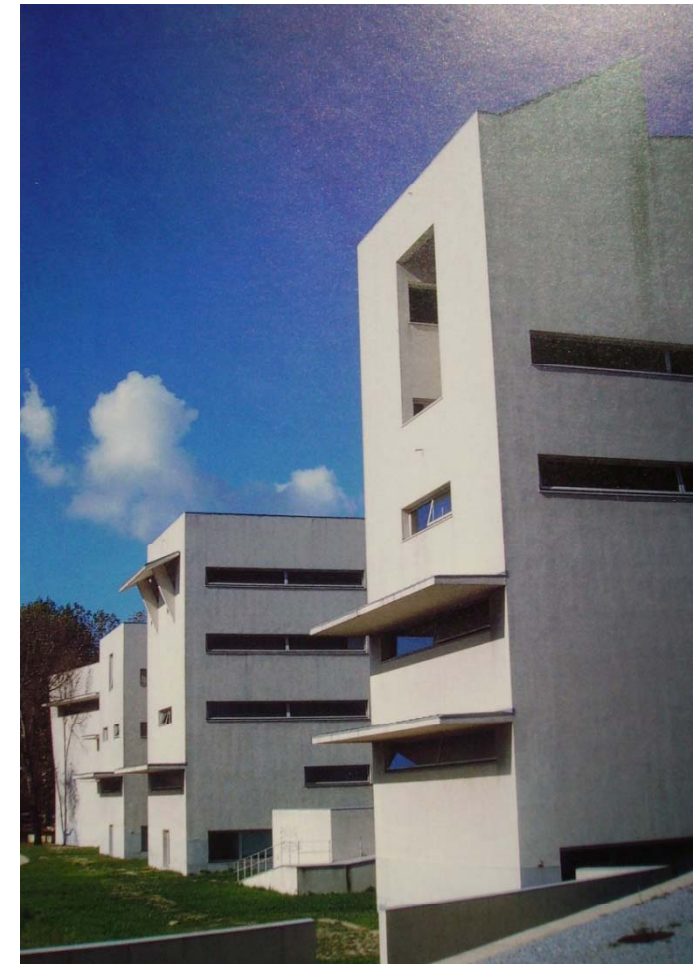
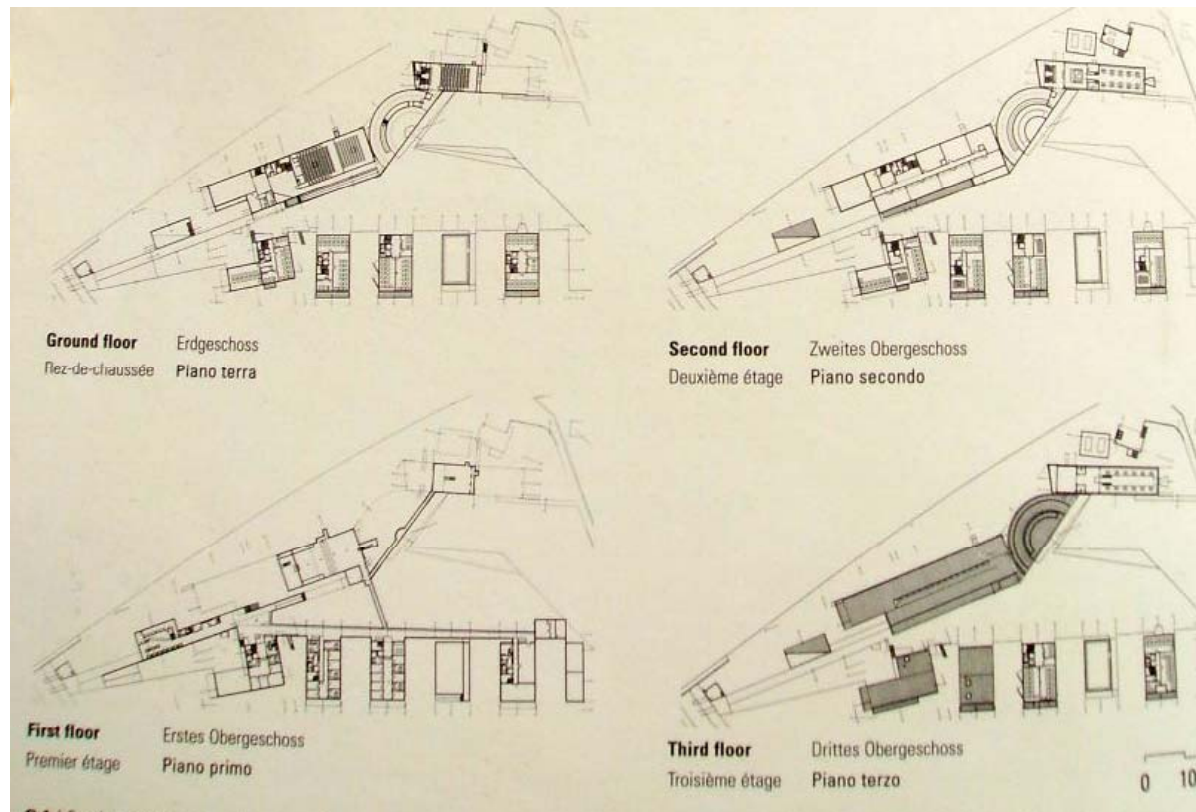


The House, a two-story affair, is seated on a wooded hillside and opens out to the south with terraces and porches which have magnificent views of the city. The ground floor is of some formal complexity with the dialogue between the walls, the horizontal niches, and the way the natural light enters. The pool operates as a prolongation of the building and of the path between the rocky hillside and the north façade.

Ground floor Erdgeschoss
Rez-de-chaussée Piano terra

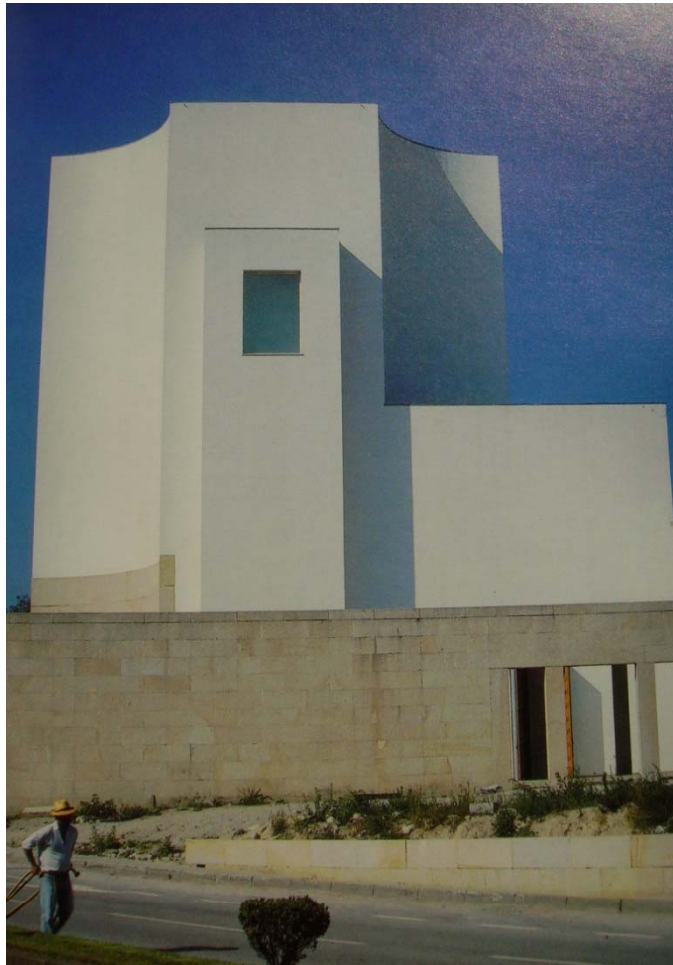
First floor Erdgeschoss
Premier étage Piano terra



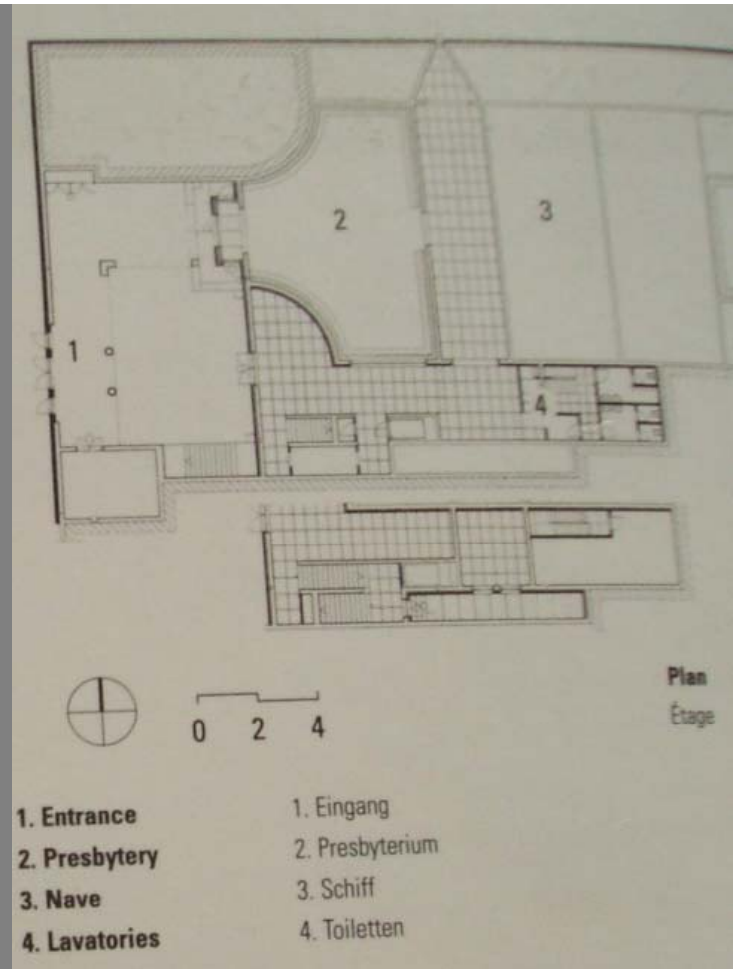


Faculty of Architecture University of Oporto (1986-1996)

The Faculty of Architecture of the University of Oporto is on the northwestern angle of a triangular site. The building has two wings that converge on a gardened patio. The lowest side, with a façade that overlooks the Duero River, is divided into five buildings, four of them five-story structure with an identical distribution (classrooms and offices) and a gallery of a single story that connects all of the buildings in the complex by a subterranean tunnel. The other wing houses administration offices, one exhibition room, different size auditoriums, and a library that is one of the truly sublime places in the entire complex. The single character of the reading room is due to a large skylight in the form of a keel of translucent glass that illuminates the double height room with its bookshelves.



Church of Santa María 1990-1996



The Church of Santa Maria is only one part of a religious complex which is also planned to include an auditorium a catechism school, and the priest's living quarters. The project , on a steep incline, occupies two stories, the upper one as an assempbly room and the lower the funeral chapel. The different style of these two spaces is already patent in the entrances on both sides. The chapel constitutes the foundation of the church itself and generates a stable, fixed level for the building. With its granite walls and its cloister, it establishes a distance from the hubbub of the neighboring street. The main nave is entered by a side door of glass or by a large

Portugal's Pavillon at the Lisbon Exposition comprised two elements by a joint construction. The first, on the South, is in fact a large plaza flanked on the North and on the South by two large porticos. These are finished in tiles of different colors. Between them is a concrete slab that describes a catenary curve after the fashion of a gigantic awning. The second body then consists of a building on a regular plan. The three levels are developed around a patio that includes a majestic tree. And at the northern end, the plan opens into a U-shaped patio.

